

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Vantage Mobility inc

Arizona Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Vantage Mobility, Inc. Makes Sustainable Changes with Help from Arizona MEP

Client Profile:

Vantage Mobility International (VMI), founded in the late 1970s, manufactures and services a complete line of high quality wheelchair accessible vans, platform lifts and scooter lifts to accommodate customers who are physically challenged. The company employs 270 people at its facility in Phoenix, Arizona.

Situation:

VMI was in the process of converting top-of-the-line vans into vehicles designed for individuals in wheelchairs so they can enjoy the freedom to travel as comfortable as possible. The situation facing VMI was the cost of time and money to re-assemble and rewire new parts in the vans. All of the parts had to be stripped out of the vehicle and stored in one large box. Some parts were being damaged before being put back into the vehicle. The company contacted the Arizona Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Arizona MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

Arizona MEP helped VMP secure an Employed Worker Training Program grant. This grant assists businesses in increasing the skills of their current workforce, reimbursing local businesses for half of their training costs. Arizona MEP then implemented a Lean Enterprise training followed by a Value Stream Mapping (VSM) and Kaizen. The Arizona MEP team conducted a total of three Time wise Principles of Lean Manufacturing workshops for 44 VMI employees. The benefits of using Lean in their performance on and off of the product line helped eliminate waste. The VSM maintained the organization and cleanliness of their workplace. "We went from looking a bit disorganized to a highly functional, high-performance area," said Doug Eaton, President and CEO of VMI. The Kaizen event solved the parts problem by creating one large rolling container, set on its end to resemble a rolling closet. Partitioning off the container and adding carpet to each section gave all the parts their own place and made them easy to find.

Results:

- * Estimated cost savings of \$15,000 annually.
- * Increased production by 30 percent.

Testimonial:

"Our company is growing, and we are looking for ways to perform on a new plane. The Arizona MEP got to the root of our organization and made some sustainable changes."

Doug Eaton, President and CEO

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